United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1164
17 June 1992

WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General calls on Yugoslav parties to restore cease-fire in Sarajevo and to uphold commitments in agreement of 5 June.

+ Secretary-General welcomes announcement by United States President and President of Russian Federation on reduction of their land-based long-range nuclear weapons; also welcomes release of two German hostages in Lebanon.

+ Secretary-General welcomes release of two German hostages released in Beirut this morning.

+ Proximity talks on Cyprus to begin tomorrow at Headquarters in accordance with request by Security Council that Secretary-General intensify his efforts to reach an overall framework agreement.

+ Phase two of Cambodian cease-fire is proceeding with troops from three parties cantoning and giving up their weapons, according to reports from Phnom Penh.

+ Secretary-General tells Executive Board of UNICEF that countries which have committed themselves at 1990 World Summit for Children must address critical issue of financial resources; Yugoslavia says humanitarian aid to refugees and displaced in his country is impeded by United Nations sanctions.

+ Eighth North American Seminar on Palestinian Rights to be held in New York from 22 to 23 June; to be followed by three-day symposium of Non-Governmental Organizations.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has called on the parties in the Yugoslav conflict to restore the cease-fire in Sarajevo, which broke down early this morning, and to uphold the commitments made in the agreement of 5 June, a United Nations spokeswoman said today.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

According to the announcement, the situation in and around the airport had "seriously deteriorated", and fighting was continuing in the area since this morning. Attempts by Chief of Staff of United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), Brigadier General Louis Mackenzie, to arrange a new cease-fire had not succeeded so far. The plan to place UNPROFOR personnel at the airport had been abandoned for the moment because of the fighting around the airport.

The spokeswoman also indicated that the 60 military observers from United Nations Iraq Kuwait Observer Mission (UNIKOM) and United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) who were to have joined the UNPROFOR observers in Sarajevo, had been blocked outside the city because of the fighting.

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The Secretary-General is "deeply gratified" and has warmly welcomed the announcement yesterday by President Bush of the United States and President Boris Yeltsin of the Russian Federation, of their intention to drastically reduce the two countries' stocks of long-range nuclear weapons by the year 2003.

In a press communiqué issued today at Headquarters, the Secretary-General also indicated that he viewed the decision of the two States to eliminate their land-based multiple warhead missiles as "a historic turning point" in the process of arms control and nuclear disarmament. He cited the announced agreement as being of particular importance because it eliminated the most destabilizing category of nuclear weapons -- the so-called pre-emptive first-strike weapons.

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In a separate announcement today, the Secretary-General has welcomed the release of two German hostages in Beirut this morning. In a statement issued at Headquarters, he said the release constituted "a victory for all who believe in the rights and dignity of the human being". He expressed his best wishes to the two individuals and their families. The two relief workers, Heinrich Strubig and Thomas Kemptner, were released after three years of captivity in Lebanon.

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A United Nations spokeswoman announced today that proximity talks on the situation in Cyprus would begin tomorrow, 18 June, at Headquarters, where separate meetings would be held in the morning with President George Vassiliou and in the afternoon with Mr. Rauf Denktash.

These talks are held in the framework of Security Council resolution 750 of 10 April, which asked the Secretary General to take up intensive efforts "to complete a set of ideas during May and June 1992". The set of ideas, endorsed by the Security Council, are considered to be an appropriate basis for reaching an overall framework agreement, "subject to the work that needs

to be done on the outstanding issues". By that resolution, the Council further requested the Secretary-General "to submit a full report to the Council on the outcome of his efforts by July 1992 at the latest and to make specific recommendations for overcoming any outstanding difficulties".

The present talks are expected to focus on a clarification of such outstanding issues as territorial adjustments and displaced persons. According to the United Nations spokeswoman, the talks are scheduled to be of "reasonable duration, as may be necessary to reach agreement on the set of ideas for an overall framework agreement".

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According to reports from Phnom Penh today, phase two of the Paris agreement on Cambodia, which began on Saturday, 13 June, is proceeding. Some 5,000 troops from three parties had cantoned as of yesterday, handing over some 5,000 weapons and more than 140,000 rounds of ammunition to the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC).

The spokesman for UNTAC said that while practical and logistical difficulties had arisen at various sites, the Force was actively working to resolve them and to help the three factions make the transition from a military to a civilian way of life.

At many locations where the National Army of Democratic Kampuchea was present, troops were expressing an interest to regroup and canton, but said they must await instructions from their commanders before they can proceed.

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Countries that committed themselves at the World Summit for Children in 1990 to improving Children's lives by the year 2000 must address the critical issue of financial resources. Otherwise the "promises made by the world to its children can not be met", Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali told the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Executive Board yesterday.

He went on to say that at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, which had just concluded in Rio de Janeiro, children were correctly identified as being at the forefront of endangered species. There could be no development without an examination of living conditions for the world's children.

The representative of Yugoslavia, Vladimir Curgus, said the harsh economic sanctions recently imposed on Yugoslavia had taken a toll on the Government's humanitarian relief activities, and had severely affected the refugees in its territory, 80 per cent of whom were mothers and children. The reduction of assistance resources to such an extend would bring into question the survival of those people. He suggested that "that mistake be corrected", and the activities of humanitarian organizations be exempted from the sanctions.

(more)

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The question of Palestine will be under review at two United Nations meetings in New York next week. The Eighth United Nations North American Seminar on the question will be taking place next Monday and Tuesday - June 22 and 23, to be followed by the Ninth United Nations North American Regional Symposium of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). The events are being organized by the Committee on the Exercice of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

The seminar, whose theme is: "Enforcing the Fourth Geneva Convention for ensuring the protection of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem", will take place in accordance with a resolution of the General Assembly last year. The meetings are part of the continuing efforts of the Palestinian Rights Committee to promote a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, in keeping with United Nations resolutions.

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